

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/601,983

Applicant(s)

HOLOUBEK, MICHAEL JON

Examiner

Eric Liou

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to 4/12/07.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-16.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
 1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.

Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. ☐ Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
4. ☐ Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application
6. ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____
7. ☒ Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. ☒ Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. ☐ Other _____

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

An Examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this Examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with Joseph L. Morales on 7/3/07.

Claims 1, 3, 6, and 12 of the application has been amended as follows:

1. (currently amended) A method for processing mail items, comprising the steps of:

separating said mail items into an envelope batch and a contents batch;

applying a first set of labels to said envelope batch, said first set of labels further comprising a first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters;

applying a second set of labels to said contents batch, said second set of labels further comprising said first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters;

scanning envelopes in said envelope batch and generating a first list of alpha-numeric characters and envelope images from said envelope batch wherein said first list of alpha-numeric characters is read from said first set of labels;

scanning contents pages in said contents batch and generating a second list of alpha-numeric characters from said contents batch wherein said second list of alpha-numeric characters is read from said second set of labels; and

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merging said envelope images with said contents pages images having common alpha-numeric characters so as to create a combined mail item image for each said mail item.

3. (currently amended) The method of claim 2, further comprising the step of: after said comparing step, generating a database report indicating any occurrences of the said alpha-numeric characters being present in only one of said envelope batch and said contents batch.

6. (currently amended) The method of claim 4, further comprising the steps of: prior to said step of displaying said envelope images and said contents pages images, sorting said images based upon image file size and selecting for display those images of a file size ~~[[generally]]~~ about equal to an image of said blank page bearing only a label.

12. (currently amended) A system for processing mail items, comprising:

a scanner; and

a control program operative on a microprocessor in electrical communication with said scanner, said control program being operative to print a first set of labels comprising a first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters and a second set of labels comprising said first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters, said control program being further operative to:

receive a first list of alpha-numeric characters ~~read from said first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters~~ and ~~images of envelopes~~ envelope images associated with said first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters;

receive a second list of alpha-numeric characters ~~read from said second sequential series of alpha-numeric characters~~ and ~~images of contents pages~~ images associated with said ~~second~~ first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters; and

merge said envelope images with said contents pages images having common alpha-numeric characters so as to create a combined mail item image for each said mail item.

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Arguments

1. The Applicant's arguments with respect to the 35 USC § 101 have been fully considered and are persuasive. The Examiner withdraws the previous 35 USC § 101 rejection. The Examiner notes, the Applicant's amendments (claims 1, 5-6, and 10-11) and the Examiner's amendments (claims 1, 3, 6, and 12) together are sufficient to overcome the 35 USC § 112 rejection in the previous office action. Thus, the Examiner withdraws the previous 35 USC § 112 rejection.

Allowable Subject Matter

2. Claims 1-16 are allowed over the prior art of record.
3. The following is an Examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

The closest prior art of record is Hayduchok et al., U.S. Patent No. (6,311,846 and 6,112,902) and Montgomery, U.S. Publication 2003/0101148.

Hayduchok discloses a method and apparatus for sorting and acquiring image data for documents. Hayduchok (6,311,846 Patent) discloses separating mail items into an envelope batch and a contents batch (Hayduchok: column 2, lines 3-5; column 3, lines 43-45), scanning envelopes in the said envelope batch and generating envelope images from the said envelope batch (Hayduchok: column 3, lines 30-31; column 6, lines 31-34), scanning contents pages in said contents batch and generating contents pages images from the said contents batch (Hayduchok: column 3, lines 54-59; column 12, lines 1-2), and merging said envelope images

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with said contents pages images to create a data record comprising the envelope images and the contents pages images (Hayduchok: column 3, lines 62-67 – column 4, lines 1-4).

Montgomery discloses the method of applying a label comprising a first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters to an envelope (Montgomery: Figure 2; paragraph 0082).

As per claims 1 and 12, the closest prior art of record taken either individually or in combination with other prior art of record fails to teach or suggest applying a second set of labels to said contents pages wherein the said second set of labels comprises the said first sequential series of alpha-numeric characters; and that said merging step includes merging the envelope images with the contents pages having common alpha-numeric characters.

Any comments considered necessary by Applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

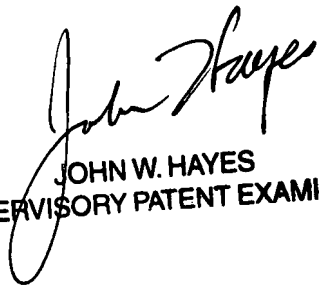
Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Eric Liou whose telephone number is 571-270-1359. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday - Friday, 8:00-5:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, John Hayes can be reached on 571-272-6708. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.

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JOHN W. HAYES
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER